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etry, American.

Dear Mr. Langdon

NBI

Light

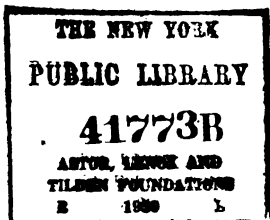
KEEP COOL, GO AHEAD,
AND A
FEW OTHER POEMS.

BY GEORGE W. LIGHT.

Our passions
Are the swords that beat against our breasts :
Courageous he who dares the unending strife.

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POEMS.

KEEP COOL.

Is a lion in the way?

Keep cool :

Tell him you respect his pride,

But, that you may go ahead,

He must please to stand aside.

Keep cool.

Does he rouse and show his teeth?

Keep cool ;

Tell him you enjoy the laugh :

Give a single lightning glance,

And he'll dwindle to a calf.

Keep cool.

Are your matters all awry?

Keep cool,

While you ponder well the reason;

If you are but right yourself,

Things will come right in their season.

Keep cool.

Though your case be desperate,
Keep cool ;
Desperate evils may be cured —
They will not withstand a MAN !
What have true men not endured ?
Keep cool.

Are you hampered by the blues ?
Keep cool :
When you find your conscience clean,
With your hands and brains at work,
Not a devil will be seen.
Keep cool.

Has a Shylock left you thin ?
Keep cool ;
He 's the loser — don't despair :
Now that your eye-teeth are through,
Keep your temper ; grin and bear.
Keep cool.

Does a villain slander you ?
Keep cool ;
He can never hit his mark :
Since his nature is so mean,
Let the snarling puppy bark.
Keep cool.

Should the Prince of Serpents hiss,
Keep cool ;
Show him Truth's old honest whip :
When he sees you bold and firm,
You will find that off he'll slip.
Keep cool.

Can't you find your quondam friends ?
Keep cool ;
You have only lost your cash :
They will all come dancing back,
When they see the dollars flash.
Keep cool.

Though your virtues meet neglect,
Keep cool :
Rest assured that, if alive,
They will never sue for praise ;
On their own wealth they will thrive.
Keep cool.

Has misfortune got your friend ?
Keep cool ;
He's a scoundrel, bear in mind !
Give him but a slim relief,
Lest his vices you unbind.
Keep cool.

If you find he'll whip the crowd,
Keep cool :
When his case is sure to mend,
Clasping him with hooks of steel,
Battle for him to the end !
Keep cool.

Has a maiden proved unkind ?
Keep cool :
If you'd win your heart's desire,
Teach young Cupid's saucy bow
You can stand its keenest fire.
Keep cool.

Though she still may play the jilt,
Keep cool :
If she care a whit for you,
When she sees you hale and strong,
You will find her coming to !
Keep cool.

Does a wanton spread her net ?
Keep cool :
Tell her that, with half an eye,
You could see the serpent coiled
Underneath her painted lie.
Keep cool.

Can't you stand upon your sense?

Keep cool ;

Queer that you should think you can !

Prudent people fathom sense

With a golden plummet, man !

Keep cool.

Cannot you reform the world ?

Keep cool :

Only one thing you can do —

Give a brave heart to the work ;

Heaven wants no more of you.

Keep cool.

Crazy as the times may seem,

Keep cool :

Outward evils need a check,

But the greatest curse of all

Is the stiffening in your neck.

Keep cool.

Let things jostle as they will,

Keep cool :

Seize this truth with heart and hand —

He that ruleth well himself

Can the universe withstand.

Keep cool.

HEART UNION.

OCEANS with seas unite ;
Winds woo the waters ; rivers mix with streams ;
Clouds mingle with each other, cheered by gleams
Of gold and crimson light ;
Stars rise and set together in the sky,
And sing and smile the more enchantingly,
Because they never part :
All things to one great marriage-law are given,
And everything is joined in love to Heaven.
When heart embosoms heart,
Pavilioned by their heavenly Father's love,
White hands of bridal seraphs wave above,
Confirming what is done,
And kindly luring to the pastures green,
Where crystal streamlets freshly flow between,
And sparkle in the sun :
And when, at last, they seek their angel home,
(Left not to wander with not where to roam,
Or find a darker sphere,)
While long-loved scenes are fading from their view,
They will not falter, as they smile adieu,
And wish to linger here ;

But, like two stars from sunset clouds ascending,
Their tender beams in soft communion blending,
Serenely they will rise,
Till lost amid the radiant lights divine,
That on the fair celestial islands shine,
In holy Paradise.

PATRONAGE.

PERCHANCE you 've seen, far out upon the waters,
(If not, I'll tell you of them,) white gulls skimming,
Casting an eye at parents, sons and daughters,
Of finny tribes, that underneath were swimming.

May be you 've noticed one of them, while wending
Over the waves, such meekness to discover,
You thought she had consented, while descending,
To call the son of some old fish her lover !

But when you saw that cunning bird's up-flying —
The fish and gull so queerly joined together —
Thought you, as they to some steep crag were hieing,
That all their speed was owing to the weather !

Bethink you, then, when Wealth and Honor doff
Their caps, and ask you to their golden dishes :
Birds wanting wings have means of flying off,
And sometimes feign a frantic love for *fishes* !

SOLITARY HOURS.

No pleasure in the silent, solemn hours,
When every siren song of earthly hope
Afar has flown?
No pleasure in the lofty emerald bowers,
Where Nature's melody breaks forth — the wide
Green woods — alone?

It is not so. The soul may there expand,
And thrill, in Melancholy's wild retreats,
With joy that, when
It leaves the heart, brings not an icy hand
To sweep its feeble strings, and quick destroy
Its rest again.

Whene'er I wander in the lonely grove,
And gaze upon the blue and silent lake,
I there can feel
That blissful charm subdue my breast, and prove
A healing balm, and on my troubled heart
Peace calmly steal.

And though my tears may mingle with the dew,
That on the morning's fresh and blooming flowers
Pearl-like doth dwell,
Light dissipates my gloom ; a brilliant hue,
A rainbow arch, gleams over Pleasure's grave ;
And none can tell

Of rapture more entrancing to the soul,
Or leaving brighter sunset-traces, when
Itself has fled :
O that, when I shall reach my final goal,
The same celestial light may tinge my morn
Beyond the dead !

PRUDENT ADVICE.

WHEN poor people want assistance,
Blink inquiry — pass them by ;
And, at a convenient distance,
See the sorry rascals die.

Should they corner you, however,
In your necessary walk,
Then, with softened shrug, endeavor
To console them with your talk.

Gaze askance, with solemn sockets,
While you proffer them your prayers ;
Don't disturb your frightened pockets —
Look with dagger-face at theirs !

If you must survey their trouble
With your justice-beaming eyes,
Tell them you have seen full double
That, with less than half their cries.

But inform them, that you really
Hope they may see better days ;
For you always loved them dearly,
Though you must condemn their ways.

Should they hint at bread and butter,
Cant of heavenly food the best ;
If they mention shelter, mutter
All about celestial rest.

Show that they may mend their breeches
Pockets, if they 'll heed advice ;
Bid them bite like hungry leeches,
Scratch like cats among the mice.

Mind them of the bull-dog's gripping,
Of the plump estate of swine —
Not the least occasion slipping,
Promising a chance to dine.

Tell them of the gold of labor ;
Tell them of the wealth of care :
If they ask, " Who is our neighbor ? "
Growl — The ghost that 's everywhere !

Then go home, and make thanksgiving
You were born to fare so well —
Thriving on your holy living,
With no soul to lose or sell.

KEEP AT WORK.

Does a mountain on you frown?

Keep at work ;

You may undermine it yet :

If you stand and thump its base,
Sorry bruises you may get.

Keep at work.

Will Miss Fortune's face look sour?

Keep at work ;

She may smile again, some day :

If you pull your hair and fret,
Rest assured she 'll have her way.

Keep at work.

Does the world lift up its heel ?

Keep at work :

Whether it be wrong or right,

May be you must bide your time,
If for victory you fight.

Keep at work.

If the devil growl at you,
Keep at work ;
That 's the best way to resist :
If you hold an argument,
You may feel his iron fist.
Keep at work.

Are your talents vilified ?
Keep at work ;
Greater men than you are hated :
If you 're right, then go ahead —
Grit will be appreciated.
Keep at work.

Everything is done by Labor ;
Keep at work,
If you would improve your station :
They have help from Providence,
Who work out their own salvation.
Keep at work.

DEACON CRAFT'S ARREST.

Ah ! has it come to this ? Is this the way
A man must sweat, who lives by honest cheating ?
Is this the black finale — that I must pay
For every dish of hell-broth I 've been eating ?

Have I but proved myself a cunning fool,
In reverencing my Master's shrewd direction ?
He promised me, when I became his tool,
To give me, all my life, his sure protection.

But here a Bill of many thousand dollars,
Comes bristling from the villain I 've obeyed ;
Pressed grimly by his chief of sheriff scholars —
And, grace forbidden, all must now be paid !

THE BILL.

For lengthened visage, loaned for twenty years,
With pious handkerchiefs for all that space ;
And solemn teaching how to shed large tears,
Whenever called to exercise that grace.

For withered conscience, proof against all pain,
Conveniently elastic for the times,
With demon-help in stretching it, when Gain
Was clamoring loud for golden-slippered crimes.

For twenty jars of sham humility,
Commixed with sundry pounds of hardest brass :
For magic gifts of rare facility
In skulking off, when Misery should pass.

For extra quantities of lamb-like meekness,
With which to clothe yourself on Sabbath days :
For thirty visits during your great weakness,
Occasioned by the injury done your chaise,

On loaning it, for once, to Mr. Pascal,
To reach with speed a distant house of want ;
And saintly skill to greet the earthly rascal,
When next you met him, with a dose of cant.

For eighty flasks of meanest self-conceit ;
Of self-deception — prime — about the same :
For twenty bottles full of wit to cheat,
And six months' teaching how to find good game.

For showing you, that in the Civil world
The darling People nothing want but honey ;
That, though the transcendental lip be curled,
The true quintessence of a Man is money.

For tonsil-cutting, with my keenest blade,
And oiling well your throat, when savage Fate
Would have you swallow, to promote your trade,
The lesser devil that would rule the State.

For pride enough to fill near half a barrel,
With rubber sack in which the wind was carried :
For seraph guise, in winning Mrs. Sparrell,
When, wanting cash, you wanted to be married.

For quack philosophy, your ample fill;
 For infidelity, a trifle less :
 For subtle craft, inflexible self-will,
 And witchery, when wanting sense, to guess.

For twenty solemn coats and pantaloons,
 To cover up your shabbiness within ;
 And wit, while in the church for many moons,
 To keep your friends from finding out your sin.

Please add the interest — compound, if you will —
 And pay my man for handing you this bill.

Alack! my savage Master thus can taunt
 The long-deluded victim of his sway !
 He knows full well I've nothing left but CANT,
 And yet he says he can't take that for pay.

And when I sent him notice, that a set
 Of circumstances baffling my control,
 Had kept the bill unpaid, he thundered, "*Let*
Me have a second mortgage on your soul !"

SUNRISE SONG.

Up ! up !

The morning breaks,
Firing all the hills ;

Up ! up !

The sunlight makes
Silver of all the rills ;
Birds are soaring,
Music pouring
On the loving breeze ;
Flowers are blowing,
Rivulets flowing
Under the bending trees.

Forth ! forth !

Fanned by Morning's purple wings,
Pluck the opening flowers ;
Join the song the Spring-time sings,
In its blushing hours ;
Dance ! dance !

While the chanting streamlet rings
Through the rustling bowers !

INWARD LIFE.

The mind is its own place, and in itself
Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.

MILTON.

WHERE is Hell? and where is Heaven?

Questions children sometimes ask,
But, to answer, hoary Teachers
Have pronounced a fruitless task;

When WITHIN us both are reigning:
Search beneath, or soar above,
Hell is but the blast of Discord —
Heaven, the regal sway of Love.

Can we see our heavenly Father?
Yes, if we are pure within;
Everywhere his blissful Presence
By the pure in heart is seen.

Could we see our inward being,
Shadowed not by outward things,
Each advancing step would lead us
Where an angel sits and sings.

Do ye say I talk of phantoms ?
Pilgrim, blind and naked, stay !
Rather we ourselves were phantoms,
Born, so soon to pass away !

Then, oh then ! how can we trifle
With our rich inheritance !
Always chasing after shadows,
Leaving everything to chance !

Let us only be in earnest ;
Let us see things as they are ;
Flee from sin's deceitful serpent,
Filled with trustful, heavenly care ;

Then would He, the Friend of Sinners,
Sup with us, and we with him,
Raising all our better feelings
To their crystal fountain's brim ;

And would break upon our vision
Glories not before conceived —
Glories, could they be recited,
Too refined to be believed !

O'er a world of sin and sorrow,
Heavenly rainbows still would gleam ;
And the ancient seraph ladder
Would no longer be a dream !

Through the vista of the Future,
We should see the dazzling rays
Of the fair Celestial City,
Promised to the Gospel days :

Mountain tops proclaiming Justice ;
All the heavens breathing Love ;
All the waters shouting Freedom,
To the listening spheres above !

THE SOMERSET.

WHILE an Irishman was riding
Over Cambridge bridge,
Gazing at the glassy water,
Near old Cragie's * edge,

There he saw that luckless village
Underneath the ground,
Seeming tumbled topsy-turvy,
At a single bound !

There was sure the noble school-house,
Looking like a fool —
Yes, the same where his young Patrick
Daily went to school

Though 't was queer, he did not wonder
That the faithless town
Found its stubborn meeting-houses
Whirling upside down :

* The Third Ward of Cambridge makes a village by itself, situated on what was formerly called Cragie's Point, extending into Charles river, in which it is often clearly mirrored.

But, anear the glass-house steeple
Stood the HOLY CROSS !
With the CHURCH he never doubted,
Till that wondrous toss !

Could it be, that he was seeing
With his honest eyes !
Or, was some infernal spirit
Filling him with lies ?

Up he sprang, and bid the driver
Let him be his own —
Wondering how a soul was *aisy*,
Till the truth was known !

When he found himself alighted,
Feeling rather pale,
Anxiously he fell to gazing,
Leaning on a rail :

When, behold ! above the water,
Rose the self-same town
He had seen, the moment previous,
Facing wrong side down !

“ Ah ! ” said Pat, “ *she did it nicely !*
Let us take a wet ; ”
(Pulling from his side a bottle) —
“ *What a somerset !* ”

MORAL.

Taking shadow for the substance,
Is no strange affair ;
Pat was only in the fashion,
When he blundered there.

Let us learn a bit of wisdom.
From this little song :
That a man, when quite vehement,
May be in the wrong.

NEGLECT.

Blest are those,
Whose blood and judgment are so well commingled,
That they are not a pipe for Fortune's finger,
To sound what stop she please. SHAKESPEARE.

NEGLECT may be an arrow,
Sprung from the certain bow of Providence,
To pierce vain hearts. The wise may learn from thence,
That there is need to harrow
Minds that will not be taught by softer measures,
But, in their sickly thirst for pompous pleasures,

Obsequiously maintain
That everything that glitters must be gold,
And wealthy hearts by dazzling shows are told :
That it is well to chain
Him who would ever with the moon be racing,
Or evening shadows over mountains chasing.

He who consents to part
With Wisdom's teachings, humbled at the shrine
Of Envy, must endure the serpent's twine
Around his inmost heart —
And, waking from enchantment, find his hopes
All twisted into savage hangmen's ropes.

But there are few that stumble
Over the rocks Neglect throws in their way,
When they are blinded not by Passion's sway,
And keep their hearts all humble ;
For on the good man's path God's sun is glowing,
And by its side celestial waters flowing.

Give me the sterling man,
Who knows the soundings of his spirit's ocean,
What winds should give its noble surface motion—
And, when the storm sweeps, can
Consent to see the white gulls fly above him,
And not repine because they do not love him.

THE STILL SMALL VOICE.

HEAR ye not, when the sunrise breaks
On the misty mountains,
And the song of the Morning wakes,
As it gleams on the silent lakes
And the silvery fountains,
The speech of the purple sky,
With the music wafting by? —
The SPIRIT is hovering nigh!
With the earliest dawn, comes the still small voice.

Hear ye not, when the sun burns strong,
And the earth rejoices,
While the streamlets murmur along
Over valleys of bloom and song,
With melodious voices,
A sound where the sea-winds play,
Where the rivulet glides away? —
All the landscape seems to say,
In the Noontide blaze, hear the still small voice!

Hear ye not, when the sun goes down,
With his banner shining,

And receives his radiant crown,
While ~~the~~ lengthening shadows frown
On his brave declining,
A whispering, soft and low,
Where the violet splendors glow? —
The winds of Paradise blow !
O'er the Sunset sea, breathes the still small voice !

Hear ye not, when the moonbeams fall
On the slumbering ocean,
And the stars, at the vesper call,
Coming forth, look down over all,
With a peaceful motion,
The words of the listening air? —
It is Nature's silent prayer !
The blessed UNSEEN is there !
With the luminous Eve, comes the still small voice !

Hear ye not, when the heavenly fires
In their pride are burning,
And the night-birds hush their lyres,
As the graceful Eve retires,
At the Night's returning,
A tread in the forest drear,
Where the dusky mountains rear? —
The FATHER OF ALL is near !
Through the starlight gloom, comes the still small voice !

GO AHEAD.

WHEN your plans of life are clear,
Go ahead ;
But, no faster than your brains :
Haste is always in the rear ;
If dame Prudence have the reins,
Go ahead.

Do not ask too broad a test :
Go ahead ;
Lagging never clears the sight :
When you do your duty best,
You will best know what is right.
Go ahead.

Never doubt a righteous cause :
Go ahead ;
Throw yourself completely in :
Conscience shaping all your laws,
Manfully, through thick and thin,
Go ahead.

Do not ask who 'll go with you ;
Go ahead :
Numbers ! spurn the coward's plea !
If there be but one or two,
Single handed, though it be,
Go ahead.

Though before you mountains rise,
Go ahead :
Scale them ? certainly you can !
Let them proudly dare the skies —
What are mountains to a MAN !
Go ahead.

Though fierce waters round you dash,
Go ahead ;
Let no hardship baffle you :
Though the heavens roar and flash,
Still, undaunted, firm and true,
Go ahead.

Heed not Mammon's golden bell :
Go ahead ;
Make no compromise with sin :
Tell the serpent he looks well,
But you cannot let him in.
Go ahead.

Better days are drawing nigh ;

Go ahead :

Making Duty all your pride,

You must prosper, live or die,

For all Heaven 's on your side.

Go ahead.

